



Commercial Design

A certain degree of visual disorder and clutter are almost inherent in the fact Liberty Road is linear in form with a heavy orientation towards the automobile. This problem is compounded by a previous lack of development controls, certain uncooperative owners, utility poles and a lack of landscaping. Liberty Road reached its saturation point in terms of clutter several years ago and some improvements have been made and should be continued through a new set of policies and projects. We are recommending the promotion of a greater sense of visual order through a series of practical and do-able steps.



Signage

The proliferation of commercial signage is the result of decades of growth and the problem should be addressed through a long term effective strategy. The first step is to not allow the situation to worsen through the introduction of new signage which competes with existing signs by being bigger and brighter. This will require new simplified regulations, requiring fewer and smaller

signs. These regulations will require detailed work through LCDC, the Office of Planning and Zoning and the Economic Development Commission.

In general, all new signs should meet the following requirements.

Free-Standing Sign:

Signs less than 15 ft. from roadway within a planting strip shall be no higher than 6 ft. and not greater than 40 sq. ft. in area.

Signs located 15-20 ft. from roadway may be 15 ft. in height and not greater than 60 ft. in area.

Signs located farther than 20 ft. from roadway should be no higher than 15 ft. and not have an area greater than 60 sq. ft.

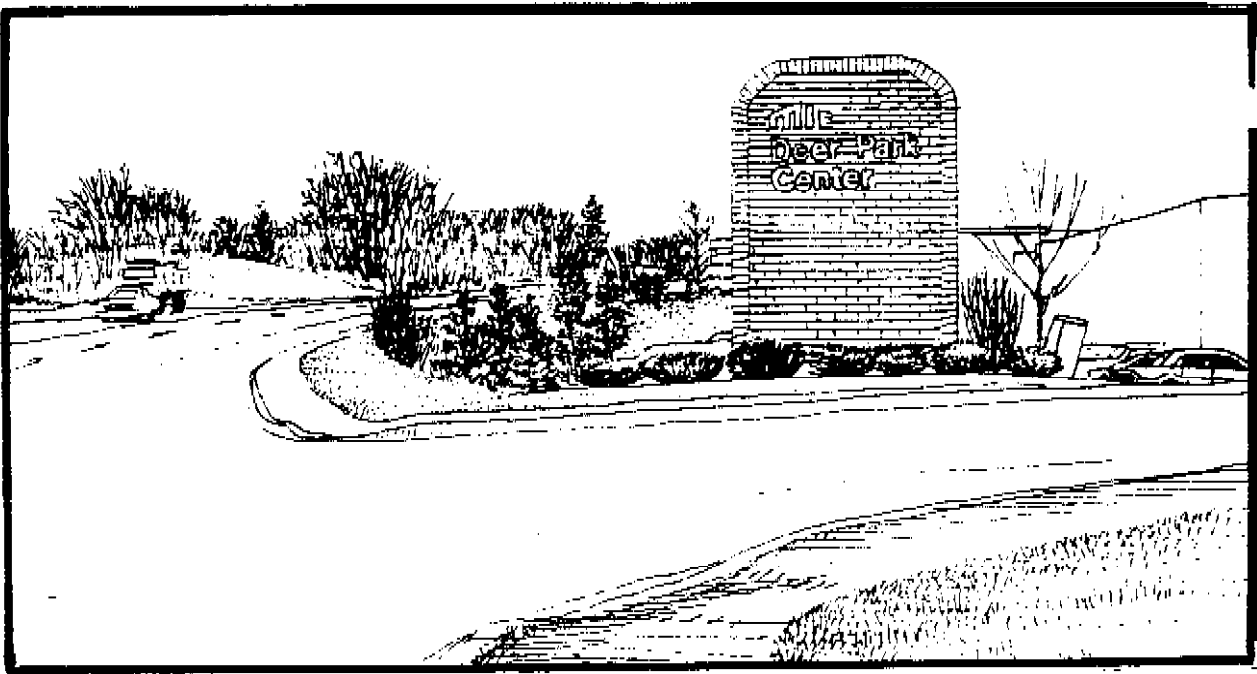
No more than three (3) ground signs should be allowed for each commercial complex, with no two (2) signs closer than 200 ft.

Wall Signs:

All store units in a single building or complex must present a uniform design and placement of signs. Signs and cutout letters should not project above roof or canopy lines. Three (3) ft. of sign area is permitted for every 10 feet of wall length. Letters should not exceed 18 inches in height.

Existing businesses should be encouraged to reduce and replace signage, whenever possible, through financial incentives and subsidies for the design and development of new signs. Old, vacated, excessive and unused signs should be removed.

Public signage should be improved through the elimination and consolidation of non-essential signage. The State Highway Administration (SHA) should reduce the number of unnecessary signs such as "no parking" signs on Liberty Road. Speed limit and route signs





could be consolidated. The Mass Transit Administration (MTA) should remove unused "bus stop" signs. The County should also reduce rignage clutter at roads intersecting Liberty Road.

LCDC should also work with the County and the State to design and install attractive directional signs as a means to help create community image and identify significant places.

Lighting along the road and within the commercial areas should be improved as a way to add to appearance, ease vehicular and pedestrian movement and promote safety. New or modified lighting arrangements within the commercial areas should give consideration to the aesthetics of the fixtures and the possible unwanted intrusion in residential areas.

Recommendations

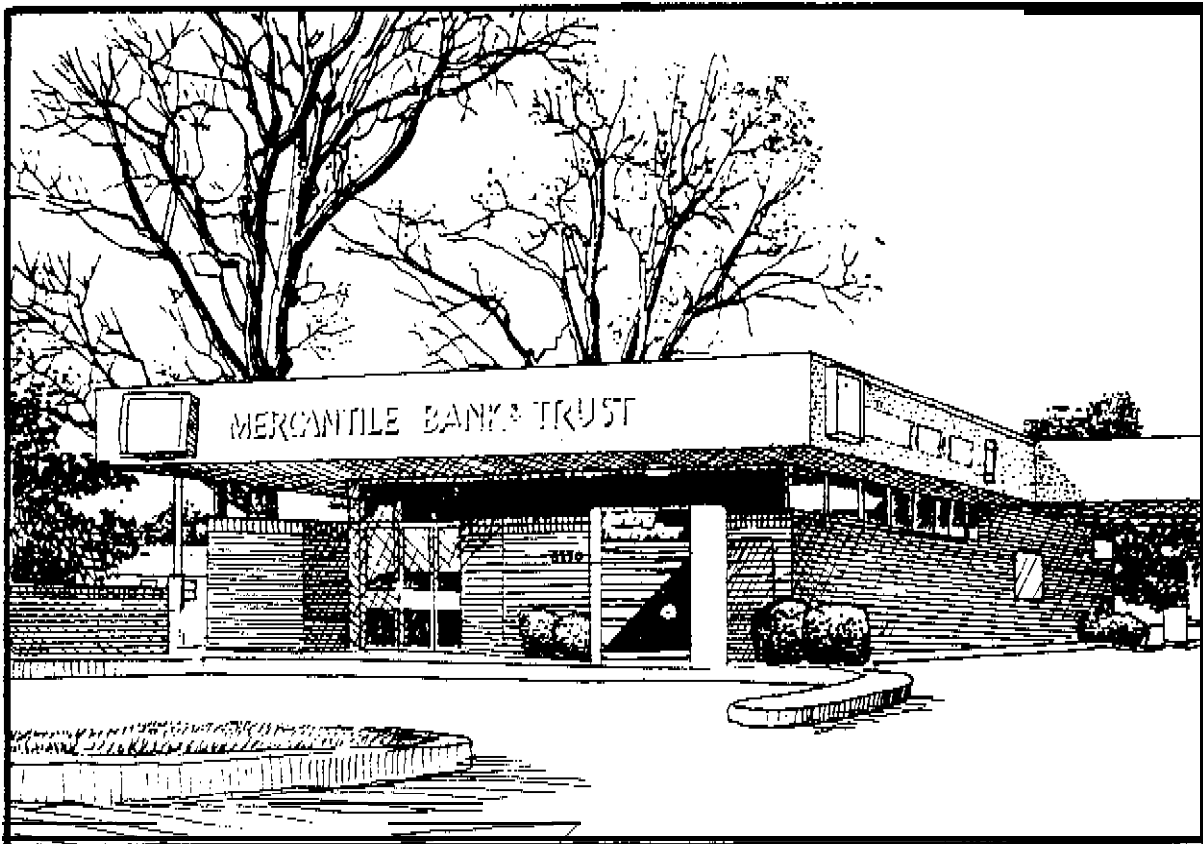
- #1 Commercial signage regulations should be reviewed and simplified. Maximum sign numbers and sizes should be reduced.**
- #2 Permits for free standing signs for a business which has been closed or vacant for six months or more should be revoked and the sign removed.**
- #3 All billboards should be prohibited on Liberty Road and existing billboards removed over a reasonable period of time.**
- #4 Uniformity of design elements within centers and/or nodes should be encouraged and adopted as part of the overlay zoning districts.**
- #5 Zoning enforcement should be applied to all signage including non-business signs such as real estate, apartments, sales, etc.**
- #6 Public signage, speed limits, no parking, etc., should be reduced and consolidated where possible.**
- #7 Public directional signs should be installed as a means to Create community image and identify significant places.**
- #8 New or replacement traffic signals should be supported by modern signal standards which incorporate public signage.**

#9 Standards for lighting within commercial areas should be developed. Mechanisms for enforcement should be established; the CRG process can be applied to new projects while a separate system should be developed for existing commercial uses.



Landscaping and Amenities

The provision of landscaping is designed to beautify and soften the corridor as recommended in the Master Plan. Landscaping projects, both public and private are already in place at numerous locations. Landscaping should be provided throughout all of the commercial areas beginning at key designated locations. Resources should be made available for the maintenance of public landscaping.



Landscaping requirements for private developments should be bolstered. Plantings should be reasonably mature and in scale with the site and buildings. A mechanism of enforcement of landscaping requirements, both installation and maintenance, should be developed.

Amenities should be provided for both aesthetic and functional reasons. Well placed amenities such as benches, bus shelters and trash receptacles can add to the character of the area while they also provide comfort and refuge.

Recommendations

- #1 Landscaping should be provided within the public right-of-way fronting Liberty Road and cross street commercial areas.
- #2 Public funds or resources, including the provision for watering, should be allocated for the continued maintenance of public landscaping .
- #3 Landscaping should be provided at public facilities such as the Family Resource Center, Library, Post Office, etc.
- #4 Landscaping requirements for private commercial and business developments should; provide for plantings in scale with the site and buildings, plantings on the side(s) of the property and adequately buffer adjoining properties.

- #5 Private landscaping plans should be reviewed by the police department for any impediments to security.**
- #6 Enforcement of landscaping requirements, both installation and maintenance, through a designated agency.**
- #7 Bus shelters and benches should be installed and maintained on a regular basis at all appropriate locations.**
- #8 Attractive and durable trash receptacles should be situated at appropriate locations throughout the area. These receptacles should replace all existing public and private (within the public right-of-way) receptacles and should feature a Liberty Road logo.**
- #9 Similar receptacles should be made available to private commercial properties.**